

## **Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County**

### **Technology Committee Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, May 13, 2021

1:00-2:00 PM

#### **Present:**

Sam Drong  
Caroline Karanja  
Tony Lusiba  
Koami Pedado  
Diane Rucker  
Sabina Saksena  
Carly Voshell

#### **Absent:**

Kowsar Mohamed-EA

#### **Staff/Guests:**

Ling Becker, Workforce Solutions  
Rebecca Milbrandt, Workforce Solutions

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#### **Call to Order & Land Acknowledgement**

Chair Tony Lusiba called the meeting to order at 1:02pm. Rucker read the land acknowledgement aloud.

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#### **Approve March Minutes**

**Motion (Lusiba/Saksena) to approve the March 11, 2021 Tech Committee meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.**

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#### **Tech Event Recap**

Lusiba presented highlights from the April 27 Future of Work webinar which featured four distinguished technology leaders. The theme of the one-hour discussion was ‘preparing the workforce for the future of work within an ever-changing tech environment’. Lusiba reported that the event went well.

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#### **Committee Work Plan Discussion**

*Tech Cooperative:* No discussion

*Ecosystem Mapping:* No discussion

*Individual Tech Journey Mapping:* Becker mentioned the importance of continuing to talk about the journey mapping. Drong and Becker will revisit this and bring it back to the committee for a more in-depth conversation.

*Tech Ladder:* Becker talked about Medica’s experience trying to hire virtual customer service reps and the mismatch between people’s actual skills versus what is needed to succeed in those jobs. She suggested developing a digital ladder so there is a common rating/ranking system used by companies, recruiters, job counselors and others about the level of technical skill a job seeker needs. Voshell suggested using Northstar Digital as an assessment. A few employers that are hiring for similar job descriptions could be asked to identify five to ten necessary skills/competencies and then training programs that teach those skills could be identified.

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#### **Director Updates**

*MTA Training Cohort:* Becker explained the Microsoft Technology Associate training is being offered for free through Ramsey County to women of color. She encouraged members to reach out people who are interested. Questions can be directed to Milbrandt.

*ARP Funding:* Becker explained that the county is receiving over \$100M in ARP funding. Unlike CARES, this funding is more flexible and does not have to be spent out until 2026. She urged members to think of big, transformational ideas that can make significant impacts in the community.

*Tech Report:* Members of the committee had a lengthy discussion about the key findings and recommendations in the Tech Report developed by RealTime Talent. Highlights from the discussion included:

- Have the county create a community-based tech hub to support multigenerational needs.
- Computer Science and IT degrees are becoming less valuable and companies are now seeking candidates with certifications that demonstrate specific knowledge. This is especially true in big tech companies.
- Embed at least some business basics and soft skills education, such as leadership and critical thinking, into certification programs. This is often lacking in short- and long-term training.
- An investment opportunity is to create certification programs and help connect job seekers with employers.
- The report mentions bootcamps as training opportunities; however, this is mostly beneficial for experienced tech professionals versus IT beginners.

Becker plans to meet with Commissioner McDonough, Councilmember Tolbert, Shawntera Hardy and RealTime Talent to go over the Tech report and discuss possible action steps for how the information in the report can be used.

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**Other**

It was decided that the committee will meet in June and cancel the meeting scheduled for July.

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**Adjourn**

Upon completion of the agenda, meeting was adjourned at 2:00pm.

Next Meeting: June – date to be determined